

GREENES,
GROATS-VVORTH
of witte, bought with a
million of Repentance.

Describing the follie of youth, the falshood of make-
thiste flatterers, the miserie of the negligent,
and mischiefes of deceiuing
Courtezans.

Written before his death and published at his
dyeing request.

This was the last request of the author, who called it a true dying request.

Fælicem fuisse infansum.

*Writ by R. Greene himselfe. It should be first to
and should be a good.*



LONDON
Imprinted for William Wright.

1 5 9 2.

GREENE

GOATS-VORTH

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Describing the fall of youth, the fall of man,
the fall of the miller, the fall of the negligent,
and the fall of the covetous.

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London Printed by W. B. 1652.



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1652

The Printer to the Gentle Readers.



Haue published here Gentle men for your mirth and benefite *Greenes* groates worth of wit. VVith sundry of his pleasant discourses, ye haue beene before delighted: But nowe hath death giuen a period to his pen: onely this happened into my handes which I haue published for your pleasures: Accept it fauourably because it was his last birth and not least worth: In my poore opinion. But I will cease to praise that which is aboue my conceipt, & leaue it selfe to speak for it selfe: and so abide your learned censuring.

Yours VV. VV.

To the Gentlemen Readers.



Entlemen. The Swan sings melodiously before death, that in all his life time vseth but a iarring sound. Greene though able enough to write, yet deepliyer serched with sicknes than euer heeretofore, sendes you his Swanne like songe, for that he feares he shall neuer againe carroll to you woonted loue layes, neuer againe discover to you youths pleasures. How euer yet sicknesse, riot, Incontinence, haue at oncè shown their extremitie yet if I recouer, you shall all see, more fresh sprigs, then euer sprang from me, directing you how to liue, yet not diswading ye fro a loue. This is the last I haue writ, and I feare me the last I shall writ. And how euer I haue beene censured for some of my former bookes, yet Gentlemen I protest, they were as I had speciall information. But passing them, I commend this to your fauourable censures, that like an Embrion without

without shape, I feare me will be thrust in-
to the world. If I live to end it, it shall be
otherwise: if not, yet will I commend it to
your courtesies, that you may as well be ac-
quainted with my repentant death, as you
have lamented my careless course of life. But
as Nemo ante obitum felix, so Acta Ex-
itus probat: Beseeching therefore so to be
deemed heereof as I deserue, I leaue the
worke to your likinges, and leaue you to your
delightes.

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf from an old book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor creases and discoloration. A large, dark, irregular stain is visible near the center of the page. The left edge of the page shows the binding of the book, with some visible stitching or glue. The overall tone is warm and slightly yellowed, characteristic of old paper.



GREENES GROATES.VVORTH OF WIT.



In an Iland bounded with the Ocean there was sometime a Cittie situated, made riche by Marchandise, and populous by long peace, the name is not mentioned in the Antiquarie, or els woꝛne out by times Antiquitie, what it was it greatly skilles not, but therein thus it happened. An old new made Gentleman herein dwelt, of no small credit, exceeding wealth, and large conscience: hee had gathered from many to bestow vpon one, so: though he had two sonnes he esteemed but one, that being as himselfe, brought vp to be golde bondman, was therefore held heire apparant of his il gathered goods.

The other was a Scholler, and married to a proper Gentlewoman and therfore least regarded, so: tis an old sayd saw: No learning & law, there is no greater foe than they that nothing know: yet

Greenes

was not the father altogether vnlettered, for he had good experience in a Nouerint, and by the vniuersall tearmes therein contained, had diuened many a yong Gentleman to seeke vnknewen countries, wise he was, for he boare office in his parish and sat as formally in his forfurd gowne, as if he had been a very wyght dealing Burges: he was religious too, neuer without a booke at his belt, and a bolt in his mouthe, readye to shoote thzough his sinfull neighboz.

And Latin hee had some where learned, which though it were but little, yet was it profitable, for he had this Philosophie witten in a ring, *Tu tibi cura*, which precept he curiously obserued, being in selfeloue so religious, as he held it no poynt of charitie to part with any thing, of whiche hee lining might make vse.

But as all mortall thinges are momentane, and no certaintie can bee found in this vncertaine world: so Gorinius, (for that shall bee this vsors name) after manye a golotic pang that had pincht his exterior partes, many a curse of the people that moued into heuens presence, was at last with his last summons, by a deadly disease arrested, wheragainst when hee had long contended, and was by Phisitionis giuen ouer, he cald his two sonnes before him: and willing to performe the old prouerbe *Qualis vita finis Ita*, he thus prepared himselfe, and admonished them. My sonnes (for so your mother sayde ye were) and so I assure my selfe one of you is, and of the other I will make no doubt.

For se the time is com, which I thought would neuer

groats worth of vytt.

neuer haue apzached and we must now be sepe-
red, I feare neuer to meete againe. This sirteene
yeares dayly haue I liude bered with disease : and
might I liue sirteene moze, howe euer miserably, I
should thinke it happye. But death is relentlesse,
and will not be intreated witles : and knowes not
what good my gold might doo him : senseles, & hath
no pleasure in the delightfull places I would offer
him. In bziese, I thinke he hath with this soles my
eldest sonne been bzought vp in the vniuersitie, and
therefoze accounts that in riches is no vertue. But
thou my son, (laying then his hand on the yongers
head) haue thou another spirit : for without wealth,
life is a death : what is gentry if welth be wanting,
but bare seruile beggerie . Some comfozt yet it
is vnto me, to thinke how many Gallants sprunge
of noble parents, haue croucht to Gorinius to haue
sight of his gold : O gold , desired gold , admired
gold : and haue lost their patrimonies to Gorinius,
because they haue not returned by their day that a-
dozed creature : How many Schollers haue writ-
ten rymes in Gorinius praise , and receiued (after
long capping and reuerence) a sirpeny rewarde in
signe of my superficial liberality. Bzeefly my yong
Lucanio how I haue beene reurent thou seest,
when honest men I confesse haue been sett farre
off : for to bee rich is to bee any thing, wise, honest,
worshipful, or what not. I tel thee my sonne : when
I came first to this Citie my whole wardzop was
onely a sute of white sheepe skins , my wealth an
old groat, my wooonning, the wide world. At this
instant (o greefe to part with it) I haue in ready

coine threescore thousand pound, in plate and Jewels xv. thousand; in Bonds and Specialties as much, in land nine hundred pound by the yeere: all which, Lucanio I bequeath to thee, only I reserve for Roberto thy wel red brother an old groat, (being y^e stocke I first began with) wherewith I wish him to buy a groats-worth of wit: for he in my life hath reproovd my manner of life, and therefore at my death, shall not be contaminated with corrupt gaine. Here by the way Gentlemen must I digresse to shewe the reason of Gorinius present speech: Roberto being come from the Academie, to visit his father, there was a great feast provided: where for table talke, Roberto knowing his father and most of the company to be execrable usurers, inayed mightely against that abhorred vice, inso-muche that hee brged teares from diners of their eyes, and compunction in some of their harts. Dinner being past, he comes to his father, requesting him to take no offence at his liberall speech, seeing what he had vttered was truth. Angry sonne (said he) no by my honestie (and that is som what I may say to you) but vse it still, and if thou canst perswade any of my neighbours from lending vppon vsurie I shold haue the more customers: to which when Roberto would haue replyde hee shut himselfe into his study, and fell to tell ouer his mony.

This was Robertos offence: now returne, wee to sicke Gorinius, who after he had thus vnequally distributed his goods and possessions, began to aske his sonnes how they liked his bequestes, either seemed agréed, and Roberto brged him with
nothing

groats worth of wit.

nothing more than repentance of his sinne: to
thine owne said he, sonde boy, & come my Lucanio,
let me giue thee good counsell befoze my death: as
foz you sir, your booke are your counsellors, and
therefoze to them I bequeathe you. Ah Lucanio,
my onely comfort, because I hope thou wilt as
thy father be a gatherer, let me blesse thee befoze I
dye. Multiply in welth my sonne by any meanes
thou maist, onely flye Alchymie, foz therein are
more deceites than her beggerlye Artistes haue
wordes, and yet are the wretches more talkatiue
than women. But my meaning is, thou shouldest
not stand on conscience in causes of pzoofit, but
heap treasure vpon treasure, foz the time of neede:
yet seem to be deuout, els shalt thou be held vyle, fre-
quent holy excercises graue companie, and aboue al
vse the conuersation of yoong Gentlemen, who are
so wedded to prodigalitie, that once in a quarter ne-
cessitie knocks at their chamber doores: pzofer them
kindnesse to relieue their wants, but be sure of good
assurance: giue faire wordes till dayes of paiment
come, & then vse my course, spare none: what though
they tell of conscience (as a number will talke) looke
but into the dealinges of the world, and thou shalt
see it is but idle wordes. Seest thou not many pe-
rish in the streetes, and fall to theft foz neede: whom
small succoz woulde releene, then where is consci-
ence, and why art thou bound to vse it more than o-
ther men? Seest thou not daylie forgeries pertu-
ries, oppzessions, rackinges of the poore, raisinges
of rents, inhauncing of duties even by them that
should be al conscience, if they ment as they speake:

but Lucanio if thou read well this booke (and with that hee reacht him Machiauels woꝝkes at large) thou shalt se, what tis to be so sole-holy as to make scruple of conscience where profit presents it selfe.

Besides, thou hast an instance by the threed bare brother here, who willing to do no woꝝng, hath lost his childes right : foꝝ who woulde with any thinge to him, that knowes not how to vse it.

So much Lucanio foꝝ conscience : & yet I know not whats the reason, but some-what stinges mee inwardly when I speake of it. I father said Roberto, it is the woꝝme of conscience, that vrges you at the last houre to remember your life, that eternall life may followe your repentance. Out foole (sayd this miserable father, I feele it now, it was onelye a kitch. I will foꝝwarde with my exhortation to Lucanio. As I said my sonne, make spoyle of yong Gallants, by insinuating thy selfe amongst them, & be not moued to thinke their Ancestoꝝs were famous, but consider thine were obscure, and that thy father was the first Gentleman of the name: Lucanio, thou art yet a Bachelor, and soe keepe thee till thou meete with one that is thy equal, I meane in wealth: regarde not beautie, it is but a bayte to entice thine neighbors eye : and the most faire are commonlye most fond, vse not too many familiars, foꝝ few proue frendes, and as easie it is to weigh the wind, as to diue into the thoughtes of woꝝldlye glosers. I tell thee Lucanio, I haue seene four-score winters besides the od seven, yet saw I neuer him, that I esteemed as my friend but gold, that desired creature, whom I haue so deely loued,
and

groats worth of wit.

and found so firme a friend, as nothing to me hauing it hath bene wanting. No man but may thinke deérly of a true friend, & so do I of it laying it vnder sure locks, and lodging my heart there with.

But now (Ah my Lucanio) now must I leaue it, and to thee I leaue it with this lesson, loue none but thy selfe, if thou wilt liue esteemd. So turning him to his study, where his theise treasure lay, he loud cryde out in the wise mans wordes, O mors quam amara, O death how bitter is thy memozy to him that hath al pleasures in this life, & so with two or thre lamentable groanes hee left his life: and to make short worke, was by Lucanio his sonne interred, as the custome is with some solemnitie: But leauing him that hath left the world to him that censureth of euery worldly man, passe wee to his sonnes: and se how his long laide by stoze is by Lucanio lookyd into. The youth was of condition simple, straight, & flexible to any counsaile, which Roberto perceiuing, and pondering howe little was lefte to him, grete into an inward contempt of his fathers vnequall legacie, and determinate resolution to worke Lucanio al possible iniurie, herebpon thus conuerting the sweetnes of his studye to the sharpe thirst of reuenge, he (as Enue is selborne idle) sought out fit companions to effect his vnbrotherly resolution. Neither in such a case is ill company far to seek, for y^e Sea hath scarce so leopordes, as populous Citties haue deceiuing Syrens, whose eies are Adamants, whose wordes are witchcraftes, whose doozes lead downe to death. With one of these female serpents Roberto consorts, and they

they conclude what euer they compassed equally to sharre to their contentes. This match made, Lucanio was by his brother brought to the bush, where he had scarce pruned his winges, but hee was fast limd, and Roberto had what he expected. But that wee may keepe forme, you shall heare howe if fortun'd.

Lucanio being on a time verie pensive, his brother brake with him in these termes . I wonder Lucanio why you are disconsolate, that want not any things in the worlde that may worke your content. If wealth may delight a man, you are with that sufficiently furnisht; if credit may procure any comfort, your word I knowe well, is as well accepted as any mans obligation: in this Citie, are faire buildings and pleasant gardens, and cause of solace, of them I am assured you haue your choyce. Consider brother you are yoong, then plod not altogether in meditating on our fathers precepts: which howe sener they sauored of profit, were most vnauerly to one of your yeares applied. You must not thinke but sundry marchants of this Citie expect your company, sundry Gentlemen desire your familiaritie, & by cōuersing with such, you will be accounted a Gentleman: otherwise a peasant, if ye liue thus obscurely. Besides, which I had almost forgot and then had al the rest beene nothing, you are a man by nature furnished with all exquisite proportion, worthy the loue of any courtly lady, be she neuer so amorous: you haue wealth to maintaine her, of women not little longed for: wordes to court her you shall not want, for my selfe will be
your

groats-vvorth of vvit.)

your secretarie. Wherfore wby stand I to distinguish
abilitie in perticularities, when in one word it may
be said which no man can gainsay, Lucanio lacketh
nothing to delight a wife, nor any thing but a wife
to delight him? My young maister being thus
clawd, and pufft vp with his owne praise, made no
longer delay, but hauing on his holidate hose hee
trickt himselfe vp and like a fellowe that meant
good sooth, he clapt hys brother on the shoulder
and said. Faith brother Roberto, and ye say the
word lets goe seeke a wife while tis heat, both
of vs together, He pay well, and I dare tourne
you loose to say as well as any of them all, well He
doo my best said Roberto and since ye are so for-
warde lets goe now and try your good fortune.

With this sooth they walke, and Roberto
went directly toward the house where Lamilia
(for so wee call the Curtizan) kept her hospitall,
which was in the suburbs of the Citie, pleasantly
seated, and made moze delectable by a pleasant
garden wherein it was scituate. So soner come they
within ken, but Mistris Lamilia like a cunning
angler made readye her change of baytes that shee
might effect Lucanios bane: and to begin the di-
scouered from her window her beauteous enticing
face, and taking a lute in her hand that shee might
the rather allure, shee song this sonnet with a
delicious voyce,

Lamillas song.

Fie fie on blind fancie,
It hinders youths ioy :
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.

When loue learnd first the ABC of delight,
And knew no figures, nor conceited phrase :
He simply gaue to due desert her right,
He lead not louers in darke winding wayes,
He plainly wild to loue, or flatly answerd no,
But now who lists to proue shall find it nothing so,
Fie fie then on fancie,
It hinders youths ioy,
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.

For since he learnd to vse the Poets pen,
He learnd likewise with smoothing words to faine,
Witching chaste eares with trothles tangs of men,
And wronged faith with falshood and disdain.
He giues a promise now, anon he sweareth no,
Who listeth for to proue shall find his changings so,
Fie fie then on fancie,
It hinders yonthes ioy,
Faire virgins learne by me,
To count loue a toy.

groats worth of yvit.

While this painted sepulcher was shadowing her
corrupting guilt, Vienna-like alluring to destruction,
Roberto and Lucanio under her window kept
even pace with every stop of her instrument, but
especially my young Musler, (that before time like
a birde in a cage had bene pentise for three liues
or one and twentie yeares at lest to extream A-
varice his deceased father) It was a world to see
how hee sometyme simperd it, striving to sett a
countenance on his new turnd face, that it might
seeme of main scot pzoofe, to behold her face without
blushing : anone he would stroke his bow-bent-leg,
as if he ment to shoote lone arrows from his thins:
then wpyt his chin (for his beard was not yet gro-
wen) with a gold wrought handkercher, whence
of purpose he let fall a handfull of Angels. This
golden shower was no sooner rained, but Lamilia
ceast her song, and Roberto (assuring himselfe
the foole was caught) came to Lucanio (that stood
now as one that had hard Medusa in the face) and
awaked him from his amazement with these
wordes. What in a trauce brother ? whence
springs these dumps ? are ye amayd at this obiect ?
or long ye to become loves subiect ? Is there not
difference betwene this delectable life, and the
imprisonment you haue all your life hether too in-
dured ? If the sight and hearing of this harmony-
ous beantie wake in you effects of wonder, what
will the possession of so deintie an essence, wherein
beantie & Art dwell in their perfectest excellence.
Another said Lucanio lets vs see some wordes, and
thee be no more then a woman, I trust youle helpe

Greenes

me to win her : and if you doe, well. I say no more
but I am yours till death vs depart, and what is
mine shall be yours world without end Amen.

Roberto smiling at his simplenes helpte him
to gather vpp his doopt gold, and without anye
more circumstance, led him to Lamilias house : for
of such places it may be said as of hell.

Noctes atque dies patet atri ianua ditis,

So their doores are euer open to entice youth to
distruction. They were no sooner entred but La-
milia her selfe like a seconde Helen, court like be-
gins to salute Roberto, yet did her wandring eie
glance often at Lucanio : the effect of her intertain-
ment consisted in these tearmes, that to her simple
house Signor Roberto was welcome, & his bro-
ther the better welcom for his sake: albeit his good
report confirme by his present demeaner were
of it selfe enough to giue him deserued entertain-
ment in any place how honorable soener : mutuall
thanks returnd, they lead this prodigall child into
a parlor garnished with goodly portraictures of
amiable personages : nere which an excellent con-
sort of musike began at their entraunce to play.
Lamilia seeing Lucanio shamefast, tooke him by
the hand, and tenderly wooing him vsed these
wordes. Beleene me Gentleman, I am very sorie
that our rude entertainment is such, as no way
may worke your content, for this I haue noted
since your first entering that your countenance hath
beene heauie, and the face being the glasse of the
hart, assures me the same is not quiet : would ye
with any thing heere that might content you, say
but

groats worth of wit.

but the word, and assure ye of present diligence to effect your full delight. Lucanio being so farre in loue, as he perswaded himselfe without her grant he could not liue, had a good meaninge to utter his minde but wanting fit wordes, he stood like a freewant that lackt a prompter, or a plaier that being out of his part at his first entrance, is faine to haue the booke to speak what he should perfoyme. Which Roberto perceiuing, replied thus in his behalfe: Madame the Sunnes brightnesse daileth the beholders eyes, the maiestie of Gods, amazeth humane men, Tullie Prince of Oratores once fainted though his cause were good, and hee that famed monsters stood amazed at Beauties ornaments: Then blame not this yong man though he replied not, for he is blinded with the beautie of your sunne darkening eyes, made mute with the celestiall organ of your voyce, and feare of that rich ambush of amber colozed dartes, whose poyntes are leuel against his hart. Well Signor Roberto said shee, how euer you interpret their sharpe leuell, be sure they are not bent to doo him hurt, and but that modestie blindes vs poore maydens from uttering the inward sorrow of our mindes, perchance the cause of greefe is ours how euer men do colour, for as I am a virgin I protest, (and therewithall shee tainted her cheekes with a vermillion blush) I neuer saw Gentleman in my life in my eie so gracious as is Lucanio only this is my greefe, that either I am dispised for that he scoynes to speak, or els (which is my greater sorrow) I feare he cannot speake. Not speake Gentlewoman quoth Lu-

Greenes

canio that were a iell indeed, yes I thanke God I
am sound of mind and lym, only my hart is not as
it was wont: but and you be as good as your word
that will soone be well, and so crauing ye of more
acquaintance, in token of my plaine meaning re-
ceiue this diamond, which my old father loue deere-
ly: and with that deliuered her a ringe wherein
was a poynted diamonde of wonderfull worth.
Which she accepting with a lowe conge, returnd
him a silke Riband for a fauour tyde with a true
lones knot, which he fastened vnder a faire Jewell
on his Better felt.

After this Diomedis & Glauci permutatio, my
yong master wared crancke, and the musike conti-
nuing, was very sozward in dauncing, to shew his
cunning: and so desiring them to play on a bozne
pipe, laid on the pavement lustely with his leaden
beeles, coznetting, like a steepe of Signor Roccoes
teaching, & wanted nothing but bels, to be a hobby-
horse in a morrice. Yet was he soothed in his folly,
and what euer he did Lamilia counted excellent: her
prayse made him proude, in so much that if hee had
not beene intreated, hee would rather haue died in
his daunce, then left off to shew his mistris delight.
At last reasonably perswaded, seeing the table fur-
nished, hee was content to cease, and settle him to
his victuals, on which (hauing before labored) hee
fed lustely, especially of a Woodrocke ppe, where-
with Lamilia his caruer, plentifully plied him. Full
Dishees hauing furnisht empty stomackes, and Lu-
canio therby got leisure to talke, fallies to discourse
of his wealth, his landes, his bondes, his ability,
and

groats-vvorth of vvit.

and how himselfe with all he had, was at madame Lamillas disposing: desiring her alsoe his brother to tell him simply what she meant. Lamilia replied my sweet Lucanio, how I esteeme of the mine eyes do witnes, that like handmaidens, haue attended thy beauteous face, euer since I firste behelde thee: yet seeing loue that lasteth, gathereth by degrees his liking: let this for that suffice, if I finde thee firme, Lamilia wilbe faithfull: if fleeting, thou must of necessity be infortunate: that hauing neuer seene any to whom before she could affect, she should be of him iniuriously forsaken. Nay said Lucanio, I dare say my brother here will giue his word for th at I accept your own said Lamilia: for with me your credits is better than your brothers. Roberto brake off their amorous pattle with this speech. With either of you are of other to fond at the first sight, I doubt not but time will make your loue more firme. Yet madame Lamilia although my brother and you be thus setward, some crosse chance may come: for Mulca cadunt inter calicem supremumq; labe. And for a warning to teach you both wit, Ile tell you an old times tale.

Before ye goe on with our tale (qd spirits Lamilia) let me giue ye a causat by the way, which shall be figured in a fable.

Lamillas Fable.



As Jove on a time came to visite the Cray, partly for kindred cheefly for craft: and finding the hole emptye of all other company, sitting only one Badger enquired the cause of his solitarinesse: hee described

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cribed, the sobaine death of his dam and sire with the rest of his consoytes. The Fox made a Friday face, counterfeiting sorrow: but concluding that deaths stroke was vneuitable perswaded him to seeke som fit mate wherwith to match. The badger soone agreed, so forth they went, and in their way met with a waton ewe stragling from the fold: the fore bad the Badger play the tall stripling, & strut on his tiptoes: for (qd he) this ewe is lady of al these lawnds and her brother cheefe belweather of sundry flockes. To bee short by the Fores perswasion there would bee a perpetuall league, betweene her harmeles kindred, and all other denouring beastes, for that the Badger was to them all allied: seduced she yeilded, and the Fox conducted them to the Badgers habitation. With drawing her asloe vnder coloz of exhortation, puld out her throat to satisfie his greedy thirst. Here I shoulde note, a yonge whelp that viewed their walke, infourmed the shepherdes of what hapned. They followed, and trained the Fore and Badger to the hole, the Fore asoze had craftely conuaid himselfe away, the shepherds found the Badger raving for the ewes murther, his lamentation being held for counterfet, was by the shepherds dogs werried. The Fore escaped: the Ewe was spoiled, and euer since betweene the Badgers and dogs hath continued a mortall enmitie: And now be aduized, Roberto (qd she) go forward with your tale, seek not by fly insinuation to turne our mirth to sorrow. Go to Lamilia (qd he) you feare what I meane not, but howe euer yee take it, I le forward with my tale.

groatsworth of wit.

Robertoes Tale.



In the North partes there dwelt an olde Squier, that had a young daughter his heire; who had (as I knowe Madam Lamilia you haue had) many youthfull Gentlemen that long time sued to obtaine her loue. But she knowing her own perfections (as women are by nature proud) would not to any of them vouchsafe fauour: insomuch that they perceiuing her relentlesse, shewed themselves not altogether witlesse, but left her to her fortune, when they found her frowardnes. At last it fortunied among other strangers, a Farmers sonne visited her Fathers house: on whom at the first sight she was enamoured, he likewise on her. Tokens of loue past betweene them, either acquainted others parentes of their choise, and they kindly gaue their consent. Short tale to make, married they were, and great solemnitie was at the wedding-feast. A yong Gentleman, that had beene long a suiter to her, vering that the Sonne of a Farmer should bee so preferred, cast in his minde by what meanes (to marre their merriment) hee might steale away the Bride. Hereupon he confers with an olde Bel-dam, called Mother Gunby, dwelling thereby, whose counsell hauing taken, he fell to his practise, and proceeded thus. In the after noone, when dauncers were verie busie, he takes the Bride by the hande, and after a turne or two, tels her in her eare, he had a secret to impart vnto her, appointing her in any wise in the euening to find a time to confer with him: she promist she would, and so they parted. Then goes hee to the Bridegroom, & with

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protestations of entire affect, protests that the great sorrowe hee takes at that which hee must utter, wheron depended his especiall credit, if it were known the matter by him should be discomered. After the Bridgrooms promise of secrecie, the gentleman tels him, that a friend of his receiued that morning from the Bride a Letter, wherein shee willed him with some sirteene horse to await her comming at a Parke side, for that she detested him in her heart as a base countrey hynde, with whome her Father compeld her to marry. The Bridgroom almost out of his wits, began to bite his lip. Nay, sayth the Gentleman, if you will by me bee aduiz'de, you shall salue her credit, win her by kindnes, and yet pzeuent her wanton complot. As how saide the Bridgroom: Nay thus saide the Gentleman: In the euening (for till the guests be gone, she intends not to gad) get you on horsebacke, and seeme to bee of the companie that attendes her comming, I am appoynted to bring her from the house to the Parke, and from thence fetch a winding compasse of a mile about, but to turne vnto olde Mother Gunbyes house, where her Louer my friend abydes: when she alights, I will conduct her to a chamber farre from his lodging; but when the lights are out, and shee expects her adulterous copesmate, your selfe (as reason is) shall proue her bedfellow, where priuately you may reprocue her, and in the morning earely retorne home without trouble. As for the Gentleman my friend, I will excuse her absence to him, by saying, she mockt me with her Mayde in steade of her selfe, whome when I knew at her alighting, I disdained to bring her vnto his pzeence. The Bridgroom gaue his hand eit shoulde be so.

groatsworth of wit.

Now by the way you must vnderstand, this Mother Gunby had a daughter, who all that day sate heavily at home with a willow garland, for that the Bridegroom (if hee had dealt faithfully) should haue wedded her before any other. But men (Lamilia) are vnconstant, money now a dayes makes the match, or else the match is made.

But to the matter: the Bridegroom and the Gentleman thus agreed: he tooke his time, conferred with the Bride, perswaded her that her husband (notwithstanding his faire shew at the marriage) had sworne to his olde sweet heart, their neighbour Gunbys daughter, to bee that night her bedfellow: and if she would bring her Father, his Father, and other friendes to the house at midnight, they should find it so.

At this the young Gentlewoman inwardly bent to bee by a peasant so abused, promised if she saw likelyhood of his slipping away, that then she would doo according as he directed.

All this thus sorting, the old womans daughter was trickly attyred ready to furnish this pageant, for her old mother provided all things necessary.

Well, Supper past, dauncing ended, and the guests would home, and the Bridegroom pretending to bring some friend of his home, got his horse, and to the Parke side he rode, and staide with the horsemen that attended the Gentleman.

Anon came Marian like mistris Bride, and mounted behind the Gentleman, away they post, fetch their compassse, & at last alight at the olde wiues house, where suddenly she is conuayd to her chamber, & the bridegroom sent to keep her company, wher he had scarce deuised how

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to begin his exhortation : but the Father of his Wyde
knockt at the chamber doore. At which being somewhat
amazed, yet thinking to turne it to a least, litch his Wife
(as hee thought) was in bed with him, hee opened the
doore, saying : Father, you are hartily welcome, I won-
der how you found vs out heere ; this deuise to remooue
our selues, was with my wifes consent, that wee might
rest quietly without the Maides and Batchelers distur-
bing. But wheres your Wife said the Gentleman? why
heere in bed saide hee. I thought (quoth the other) my
daughter had beene your wife, for sure I am to day shee
was giuen you in marriage. You are merrely disposed,
saide the Bridegroome, what thinke you I haue another
wife? I thinke but as you speake quoth the Gentleman,
for my daughter is below, and you say your wife is in the
bed. Below (saide he) you are a merry man, and with that
casting on a night gone, hee went downe, where when
he saw his wife, the Gentleman his Father, and a num-
ber of his friends assembled, hee was so confounded, that
how to behaue himselfe he knew not; onely he cryde out
that he was deceiued. At this the old woman arises, and
making her selfe ignorant of all the whole matter, in-
quires the cause of that sodayne tumult. When she was
told the new Bridegroome was founde in bed with her
daughter, she exclaimed against so great an iniurie. Mari-
an was calde in quorum : shee iustified, it was by his al-
lurement: he being condemned by all their consents, was
adiudged vnworthy to haue the Gentlewoman vnto his
Wife, and compeld (for escaping of punishment) to mar-
rie Marian : and the young Gentleman (for his care in
discovering the Farmers sonnes lewdnes) was recom-
pensd with the Gentlewomans euer during loue.

Quoth

groatsworth of wit.

Quoth Lamilia, and what of this? Nay nothing said Roberto, but that I haue told you the effects of sodaine loue: yet the best is, my brother is a maidenly Batchler; and for your selfe, you haue not beene troubled with many suiters. The fewer the better, said Lucanio. But brother, I can you little thanke for this tale, heereafter I pray you vse other table talke. Lets then end talk, quoth Lamilia, and you (signior Lucanio) and I will go to the Chesse. To Chesse, said he, what meane you by that? It is a game, said she, that the first daunger is but a checke, the worst, the giuing of a mate. Well, said Roberto, that game yee haue beene at already then, for you checkt him first with your beauty, & gaue your selfe for mate to him by your bounty. Thats wel taken brother, said Lucanio, so haue we past our game at Chesse. Will ye play at Tables then, said she: I cannot, quoth hee, for I can goe no further with my game, if I be once taken. Will ye play then at cards. I said he, so it bee at one and thirtie. That foles game, said she: Well all to hazard, said Roberto, and brother you shall make one for an houre or two: content quoth he. So to dice they went, and fortune so fauored Lucanio, that while they continued square play, hee was no looser. Anone coosenage came about, and his Angels being double winged, flew cleane from befoze him. Lamilia being the winner, preparde a banquet; which finished, Roberto aduise his brother to departe home, and to furnish himselfe with more Crownes, least hee were outcrackt with new commers.

Lucanio loath to be outcountenanst, followed his aduise, desiring to attend his returue, which hee befoze had determined vnrrequested: For as soone as his brothers backe was turned, Roberto begins to reckon with La-

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milia, to bee a sharer as well in the money deceitfully wonne, as in the Diamond so wilfully giuen. But she, secundum mores meretricis, iested thus with the scholar. Why Roberto, are you so well read, and yet she we your selfe so shallow witted, to deeme women so weake of conceit, that they see not into mens demerites. Suppose (to make you my scale to catch the woodcocke your brother) that my tongue ouer-running myne intent, I spake of liberall rewarde: but what I promise, theres the point; at least what I part with I will be well aduise. It may be you will thus reason: Had not Roberto traide Lucanio vnto Lamillas lure, Lucanio had not now beene Lamillas pray: therefore sith by Roberto she possesseth the prize, Roberto merites an equal part. Monstrous absurd if so you reason; as wel you may reason thus: Lamillas dog hath kild her a Deere, therefore his Mistris must make him a pastie. No poore pennilelle Poet, thou art beguilde in mee, and yet I wonder how thou couldest, thou hast beene so often beguilde. But it fa- reth with licentious men, as with the chased Boze in the stream, who being greatly refreshd with swimming, neuer feeleth aue smart untill hee perish recurelessly wounded with his owne weapons. Reasonlesse Roberto, that hauing but a brokers place, askt a lenders re- ward. Faithles Roberto, that hast attempted to betray thy brother, irreligiouly forsaken thy Wife, deseruedly been in thy fathers eie an abiect: thinkst thou Lamilla so loose, to consort with one so lewd. No hypocrite, the sweet Gentleman thy brother, I will till death loue, & thee while I liue, loath. This share Lamilla giues thee, other getst thou none.

As Roberto would haue replide, Lucanio approcht:
to

groatworth of wit.

to whom Lamelia discourst the whole deceit of his brother, & neuer rested intimating malicious arguments, til Lucanio utterly refuse Roberto for his brother, & for euer forbad him his house. And when he would haue peeled reasons, and formed excuse, Lucanios impatience (vrgd by her importunate malice) forbad all reasoning with them that was reasonlesse, and so giuing him Jacke Drums intertainment, shut him out of doores: whom we will follow, & leaue Lucanio to the mercie of Lamelia. Roberto in an extreme extasse, rent his haire, curst his destenie, bland his trechery, but most of all exclaimed against Lamelia: and in her against all enticing Curtizans, in these tearms.

What meant the Poets in inuective verse,
To sing Medeas shame, and Scillas pride,
Calipsoes charmes, by which so many dyde?
Onely for this their vices they rehearse,
That curious wits which in this world conuerse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shoes,
Of such false Syrens, those home-breeding foes,
That from the eyes their venom do disperse.
So soone kills not the Basiliske with sight,
The Vipers tooth is not so venomous,
The Adders tung not halfe so dangerous,
As they that beare the shadow of delight,
Who chaine blind youths in tramels of their haire,
Till wast bring woe, and sorrow hast despaire.

With this he laide his head on his hand, and leant his elbow on the earth, sighing out sadly,

Hen patior telis vulnera facta meis!

On the other side of the hedge sate one that heard his sorrow: who getting ouer, came towards him, and
wake

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brake off his passion. When hee approached, hee saluted Roberto in this sort.

Gentleman quoth hee (for so you seeme) I haue by chaunce heard you discourse some part of your greefe; which appeareth to be more than you will discouer, or I can conceipt. But if you vouchsafe such simple comforte as my abilitie may peeke, assure your selfe, that I will endeavour to doe the best, that either may procure you profite, or bring you pleasure: the rather, for that I suppose you are a scholler, and pittie it is men of learning should liue in lacke.

Roberto wondering to heare such good wordes, for that this iron age affoordes few that esteeme of vertue; returnd him thankfull gratulations, and (vrgde by necessitie) vttered his present grieve, beseeching his aduise how he might be employed. Why, easily quoth hee, and greatly to your benefite: for men of my profession gette by schollers their whole liuing. What is your profession, said Roberto? Truly sir, saide hee, I am a player. A player, quoth Roberto, I tooke you rather for a Gentleman of great liuing; for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you, you would bee taken for a substantiall man. So am I where I dwell (quoth the player) reputed able at my proper cost, to build a Windmill. What though the world once went hard with me, when I was faine to carry my playing fardle a footebacke; Tempora mutantur, I know you know the meaning of it better than I, but I thus consider it, its otherwise now; for my very share in playing apparell will not be sold for two hundred pounds. Truly (said Roberto) tis strange, that you should so prosper in that wayne practise, for that it seemes to mee your voice is nothing
gra

groatsworth of wit.

gratious. May then, saide the Player, I mislike your
iudgement : why, I am as famous for Delphicus, &
the King of Fairies, 'as euer was any of my time. The
twelue labors of Hercules haue I terribly thundred on
the Stage, and plaide thre Scenes of the Deuill in the
High way to heauen. Haue ye so (saide Roberto?) then
I pray you pardon me. May more (quoth the Player) I
can serue to make a pretie speech, for I was a countrey
Author, passing at a Doxall, for twas I that pend the
Doxall of mans witte, the Dialogue of Diues, and for
seuen yers space was absolute Interpreter to the pap-
pets. But now my Almanacke is out of date:

The people make no estimation,
Of Morralsteaching education.

Was not this prettie for a plaine rime extempore:
if ye will ye shall haue more. May its enough, said Ro-
berto, but how meane you to vse me? Why sir, in ma-
king Playes, said the other, for which you shall be well
paid, if you will take the paines.

Roberto perceiuing no remedie, thought best in re-
spect of his present necessitie, to try his wit, & went with
him willingly: who lodgd him at the Townes end in a
house of retayle, where what happened our Poet, you
shall after heare. There by conuersing with bad compa-
ny, he grew A maloin penus, falling from one vice to an
other: and so hauing founde a vaine to finger crowns,
he grew cranker than Lucanio, who by this time began
to droope, being thus dealt with by Laminia. Shee ha-
uing bewitched him with hir enticing wiles, caused him
to consume in lesse than two yeres that infinite treasure
gathered by his father with so many a poye mā's curse.
His lands sold, his iewels pawned, his money wasted, he

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was cased by Lamia, that had cosseid him of all. Then walke he like one of Duke Humfreys Squires, in a thread-bare cloake, his hose drawne out with his heeles, his shoes vnseamed, least his feete should sweate with heat: now (as witlesse as hee was) he remembred his Fathers words, his unkindnes to his brother, his carelesnes of himselfe. In this sorow he sate down on pennilesse bench; where when Opus and Vsus told him by the chymes in his stomacke it was time to fall vnto meat, he was faine with the Camelion to feed vpon the aire, and make patience his best repast.

While he was at this feast, Lamia came flaunting by, garnished with the iewels wherof she beguiled him, which sight serued to close his stomacke after his cold cheare. Roberto hearing of his brothers beggery, albeit he had little remorse of his miserable state, yet did seeke him out, to vse him as a propertie, whereby Lucanio was somewhat prouided for. But being of simple nature, hee serued but for a blocke to whet Robertoes wit on: which the poore soule perceiuing, he forsooke all other hopes of life, and fell to be a notorious Pandar, in which detested course he continued till death. But Roberto now famozed for an Arch-plaimging-poet, his purse like the sea sometime sweld, anon like the same sea fell to a low ebbe; yet seldom he wanted, his labors were so well esteemed. Harry this rule he kept, what euer he fingerd afoze hand, was the certaine meanes to vnbinde a bargaine, and being askt why hee so slightly dealt with them that did him good? It becoms me, saith hee, to bee contrary to the worlde; for commonly when vulgar men receiue earnest, they doe perfozme, when I am paid any thing afoze-hand, I breake my promise.

He

groatsworth of wit.

He had shift of lodgings, where in euery place his Whore-
stesse wrote up the wofull remembrance of him, his laun-
dresse, and his boy; for they were euery his in household,
beside retainers in sundry other places. His companie
were lightly the lewdest persons in the land, apt for pil-
ferie, perjurie, forgerye, or any villainy. Of these hee
knew the casts to cog at cards, coozen at Dice; by these
he leard the legerdemaines of nips, foytes, connycat-
chers, crosbyters, lifts, high Lawyers, and all the rab-
ble of that vncleane generation of vipers: and pittifully
could he paint out their whole courses of craft: So cunning
he was in all craftes, as nothing rested in him al-
most but craftines. How often the Gentlewoman his
Wife labored vainely to recall him, is lamentable to
note: but as one giuen ouer to all lewdnes, he commu-
nicated her sorrowfull lines among his loose trulls, that
iested at her bootlesse laments. If he could any way get
credite on scores, he would then brag his creditors car-
ried stones, comparing euery round circle to a groining
O. procured by a painfull burden. The shamefull end
of sundry his consoytes deseruedly punished for their a-
miss, wrought no compunction in his heart: of which
one, brother to a Brothell hee kept, was trust vnder a
tree as round as a Ball.

To some of his swearing companions thus it hap-
pened: A crue of them sitting in a Tauerne carowling,
it fortuned an honest Gentleman and his friend, to en-
ter their roome: some of them being acquainted with
him, in their dominæring drunken vaine would haue
no nay but downe hee must needs sitte with them; be-
ing placed, no remedie there was, but he must needs
keepe euery compasse with their vnseemely carowling.

Greenes

Which he refusing, they fell from high words to sound strokes, so that with much ado the Gentleman saued his owne, and shifted from their company. Being gone one of these tiplers forsooth lackt a gold Ring, the other sware they saw the Gentleman take it from his hande. Upon this the Gentleman was indited before a Iudge, these honest men are depose: whose wisdom weighing the time of the braule, gaue light to the Iury, what power wine-washing popson had, they according vnto conscience found the Gentleman not guiltie, and God released by that verdict the innocent.

With his accusers thus it fared: One of them for murder was worthily executed: the other neuer since prospered: the third, sitting not long after vpon a lustie horse, the beast sodenly dyde vnder him, God amend the man.

Roberto euery day acquainted with these examples, was notwithstanding nothing bettered, but rather hardened in wickednesse. At last was that place iustified, God warneth men by dreams and visions in the night, and by knowne examples in the day, but if hee returne not, hee comes vppon him with iudgement that shall bee felt. For now when the number of deceites caused Roberto bee hatefull almost to all men, his immeasurable drinking had made him the perfect Image of the Dragg, and the loathsome scourge of Lust tyrannized in his bones: lying in extreame pouerty, and hauing nothing to pay but chalke, which now his Host accepted not for currant, this miserable man lay comfortlesly languishing, hauing but one groat left (the iust proportion of his Fathers Legacie) which looking on, he cryed: O now it is too late, too late to buy witte with the: and therefore
will

groatsworth of wit.

will I see if I can sell to carelesse youth what I negligently forgot to buy.

Here (Gentlemen) breake I off Robertoes speech; whose life in most parts agreeing with mine, founs one selfe punishment as I haue doone. Hereafter suppose me the saide Roberto, and I will goe on with that hee promised: Greene will send you now his groats-worth of wit, that neuer shewed a mites-worth in his life: e though no man now bee by to doe me good: yet ere I die I will by my repentaunce indeuour to doe all men good.

Deceiuing world, that with alluring toyes,
Hast made my life the subiect of thy scorne:
And scornest now to lend thy fading ioyes,
To length my life, whom friends haue left forlorne.
How well are they that die ere they be borne,
And neuer see thy sleights, which few men shun,
Till vnawares they helpelesse are vndone.

Oft haue I sung of Loue, and of his fire,
But now I finde that Poet was aduizde;
Which made full feasts increasers of desire,
And proues weake loue was with the poore despizde.
For when the life with food is not suffizde,
What thought of Loue; what motion of delight;
VVhat pleasure can proceed from such a wight?

VVitnesse my want, the murderer of my wit;
My rauisht sence of wonted furie rest;
VVants such conceit, as shou'd in Poems sit
Set downe the sorrow wherein I am left:

Greenes

But therefore haue high heauens their gifts bereft,
Because so long they lent them mee to vse,
And I so long their bountie did abuse.

O that a yeare were graunted me to liue,
And for that yeare my former wits restorde:
VVhat rules of life, what counsell would I giue?
How should my sinne with sorrow be deplorde?
But I must die of euery man abhorde.

Time loosely spent will not againe be wonne,
My time is loosely spent, and I vndone.

O horrenda fames, how terrible are thy assaults:
but vermis conscientia, more wounding are thy stings.
Ah Gentlemen, that liue to read my broken and confu-
sed lines, looke not I should (as I was wont) delight
you with vaine fantasies, but gather my follies altoge-
ther; and as pee would deale with so many parricides,
cast them into the fire: call them Telegones, for now
they kil their Father, and euery lewd line in them writ-
ten, is a deepe piercing wound to my heart; euery idle
houre spent by any in reading them, brings a million of
sorowes to my soule. O that the teares of a miserable
man (for neuer any man was yet more miserable)
might wash their memorie out with my death; and that
those works with mee together might bee interd. But
sith they cannot, let this my last worke witnes against
them with mee, how I detest them. Blacke is there-
membraunce of my blacke works, blacker than night,
blacker than death, blacker than hell.

Learne wit by my repentance (Gentlemen) and let
these few rules following be regarded in your lines.

I First

groatsworth of wit.

1 First in al your actions set God befoze your eyes; for the feare of the Lord is the beginning of wisdome: Let his word be a lanterne to your feet, and a light vnto your paths, then shall you stand as firme rocks, and not be mocked.

2 Beware of looking backe, for God will not bee mocked; and of him that hath receiued much, much shall be demaunded.

3 If thou be single, and canst abstain, turne thy eyes from vanitie; for there is a kinde of women bearing the faces of Angels, but the hearts of Devils, able to intrap the elect if it were possible.

4 If thou bee married, forsake not the wife of thy youth to follow straunge flesh; for whoremongers and adulterers the Lord will iudge. The doore of a harlot leadeth downe to death, and in her lips there dwels destruction; her face is decked with odors, but she bringeth a man to a moysell of bread and nakednes: of which my selfe am instance.

5 If thou be left rich, remember those that want, & so deale, that by thy wilfulness thy selfe want not: Let not Tauerners and Victuallers be thy Executors; for they will bring thee to a dishonorable graue.

6 Oppresse no man; for the crie of the wronged ascendeth to the eares of the Lord: neyther delight to increase by Usurie, least thou lose thy habitation in the everlasting Tabernacle.

7 Beware of building thy house to thy neighbors hurt; for the stones will crie to the timber; Wee were laid together in bloud: and those that so erect houses, calling them by their names, shall lie in the graue lyke Sheepe, and death shall gnaw vpon their soules.

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8 If thou be poore, be also patient, and strue not to grow rich by indirect meanes; for goods so gotten shal vanish like smoke.

9 If thou bee a Father, Maister, or Teacher, ioyne good example with good counsaile; else little auaille precepts, where life is different.

10 If thou be a Sonne or Seruant, despise not reproofe; for though correction bee bitter at the first, it bringeth pleasure in the end.

Had I regarded the first of these rules, or bene obedient to the last; I had not now at my last ende, bene left thus desolate. But now, though to my selfe I giue Consilium post facta; yet to others they may serue for timely precepts. And therefore (while life giues leaue) I will send warning to my olde consoyts, which haue liued as loosely as my selfe, albeit weaknesse will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow Schollers about this Citie, will I direct these few insuing lines.

To those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance,
that spend their wits in making plaies, R.G.
wiheth a better exercise, and wisdom
to preuent his extremities.

If wofull experience may moue you (Gentlemen) to beware, or vnhard of wretchednes intreate you to take heed: I doubt not but you wil looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and indenuour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, (for with the wil I first begin) thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with the (like the foole in his heart) There is no God, shoulde now giue glorie

groatsworth of wit.

glorie vnto his greatnes: for penetrating is his power,
his hand lyes heauie vpon me, hee hath spoken vnto mee
with a voice of thunder, and I haue felt he is a God that
can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his
gift, bee so blinded, that thou shouldst giue no glorie to
the giuer? Is it pestilent Machinilian policy that thou
hast studied? O peeuish follie! What are his rules but
meere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small
time the generation of mankind. For if Sic volo, sic iu-
beo, hold in those that are able to commaund: and if it
be lawfull Fas & nefasto to do any thing that is benefici-
all; onely Tyrants should possesse the earth, and they
striving to exceed in tyrannie, should each to other be a
slaughter man; till the mightiest outliving all, one
stroke were lefte for Death, that in one age mans life
should end. The brother of this Diabolicall Atheisme
is dead, and in his life had neuer the felicitie hee aymed
at: but as he began in craft, liued in feare, and ended in
despaire. Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia? This
murderer of many brethren, had his conscience seared
like Caine: this betrayer of him that gaue his life for
him, inherited the portion of Iudas: this Apostata per-
ished as ill as Iulian: and wilt thou my friend be his dis-
ciple? Look but to me, by him perswaded to that liber-
tie, and thou shalt find it an infernall bondage. I knowe
the least of my demerites merit this miserable death, but
wilfull striving against knowne truth, exceedeth all the
terrors of my soule. Defer not (with me) till this last
point of extremitie; for litle knowest thou how in the end
thou shalt be visited.

With thee I ioyne yong Iuuenall, that byting Sa-
tyrist, that lastly with mee together writ a Comedie.

F

Sweet

Sweet boy, might I aduise thee, be aduise, and get not many enemies by bitter wordes: inueigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a libertie to reprove all, and name none; for one being spoken to, all are offended; none being blamed no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, or tread on a worne and it will turne: then blame not Schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reprove.

And thou no lesse deseruing than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour; driven (as my selfe) to extreme shifts, a litle haue I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet S. George, thou art vnworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warnd: for vnto none of you (like mee) sought those burres to cleaue: those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all haue beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken: Des trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions. I knowe the best husband of
you

groatworth of wit.

you all will neuer proue an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will neuer proue a kind nurse: yet whilst you may, seeke you better Masters; for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subiect to the pleasure of such rude groomes.

In this I might insert two more, that both haue writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but lette their owne workes serue to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they perseuere to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new-commers, I leaue them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will bite the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skils not though they make a least at them.

But now returne I againe to you thre, knowing my miserie is to you no newes: and let mee hartly increat you to be warned by my harms. Delight not (as I haue done) in irreligious oathes; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkennes, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equall vnto beasts. Flye lust, as the deathman of the soule; and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhorre those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares: and when they foorth you with tearmes of Maister ship, remember Robert Greene, whome they haue often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your liues are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care bestowed to all of you to maintaine: these with wind-puffe wrath may be extinguish, which drunkennes put out, which negligence let fall: for mans time is not of it selfe so short, but it is more shortened by sinne. The fire of my light is now at the last snuffe, and for want of better wit to ser-

Greenes

State it, there is no substance left for life to feede on.
Trust not then (I beseech ye) to such weake staies: for
they are as changeable in minde, as in many attyres.
Well, my hand is tyde, and I am forst to leaue where I
would begin: for a whole booke cannot containe their
wryongs, which I am forst to knit vp in some fewe lines
of words.

Desirous that you should liue,
though himselfe be dying:

Robert Greene.

Now to all men I bid farewell in like sort, with this
conceited Fable of that olde Comedian Aesope.

AN Ant and a Grasshopper walking together on a
Greene, the one carelesly skipping, the other care-
fully prying what winters prouision was scattered in
the way: the Grasshopper scorning (as wantons will)
this needlesse thrift (as hee learned it) reprooued him
thus:

The greedy miser thirsteth still for gaine,
His thrift is theft, his weale works others woe:
That foole is fond which will in caues remaine,
When mongst faire sweets he may at pleasure goe.

To this the Ant perceiuing the Grasshoppers mea-
ning, quickly replyde:

The thriftie husband spares what vnthrift spends,
His thrift no theft, for dangers to prouide:
Trust to thy selfe, small hope in vwant yeeld friends,
Home is better than the deserts wide.

groatsworth of wit.

In short time these two parted, the one to his pleasure, the other to his labour. Anon Haruest grew on, and rest from the Grasshopper his wonted moisture. Then weakly I kipt hee to the meadowes brinks: where till fell winter he abode. But stormes continually pouring, hee went for succour to the Ant his olde acquaintance, to whom hee had scarce discovered his estate, but the waspish little worme made this reply.

Packe hence (quoth he) thou idle lazie worme,
My house doth harbor no vnthrifftie mates:
Thou scornst to toyle, & now thou feelst the storme,
And starust for food while I am fed with cates.

Vse no intreats, I will relentlesse rest,
For toying labour hates an idle guest.

The Grasshopper foodlesse, helpleffe and strengthlesse,
got into the next brooke, and in the peeling sand digde
for himselfe a pit: by which hee likewise ingraue this
Epitaph.

When Springs greene prime arrayd me with delight,
And euery power with youthfull vigor fild,
Gaue strength to worke what euer fancie wild:
I neuer feard the force of winters spight.

When first I saw the sunne the day begin,
And dry the Mornings tears from hearbs and grasse;
I little thought his chearefull light would passe,
Till vgly night with darknes enterd in.

And then day lost I mournd, spring past I wayld,
But neither teares for this or that auailde.

Greenes

Then too too late I praised the Emmets paine,
That sought in spring a harbor gainst the heate:
And in the haruest gathered winters meate,
Preuenting famine, frosts, and stormy raine.

My wretched end may warn Greene springing youth,
To vse delights, as toyes that will deceiue,
And scorne the world before the world them leaue:
For all worlds trust, is ruine without ruth.

Then blest are they that like the toyling Ant,
Prouide in time gainst winters wofull want.

With this the Grasshopper yeelding to the wethers ex-
tremity, died comfortles without remedy. Like him my
selfe: like me, shall all that trust to friends or times in-
constancie. Now faint I of my last infirmity, beseeching
them that shall burie my bodie, to publish this last fare-
well written with my wretched hand.

Felice fuisse infaustum.

A letter written to his wife, founde with
this booke after his death.

The remembrance of the many wrongs offered thee,
and thy vireproued vertues, adde greater sorrow
to my miserable state, than I can utter or thou conceiue.
Neither is it lessened by consideration of thy absence,
(though shame would hardly let me behold thy face) but
exceedingly aggravated, for that I cannot (as I ought)
to thy owne selfe reconcile my selfe, that thou mightst
witnes my inward woe at this instant, that haue made
thee

groatsworth of wit.

thee a wofull wife for so long a time. But equall heauen hath denide that comfort, giuing at my last neede like succour as I haue sought all my life: being in this extremitie as voide of helpe, as thou hast beenc of hope. Reason would, that after so long wast, I should not send thee a child to bring thee greater charge: but consider he is the fruit of thy wombe, in whose face regarde not the Fathers fautes so much, as thy owne perfections. He is yet Greene, and may grow straight, if he be carefully tended: otherwise, apt enough (I feare mee) to follow his Fathers folly. That I haue offended thee highly I knowe, that thou canst forget my iniuries I hardly beleue: yet perswade I my selfe, if thou saw my wretched estate, thou couldst not but lament it: nay certainly I know thou wouldest. All my wrongs muster themselves before mee, euery euill at once plagues mee. For my contempt of God, I am contemned of men: for my swearing and forswearing, no man will beleue me: for my gluttony, I suffer hunger: for my drunkennes, thirst: for my adultery, vlcereous sores. Thus God hath cast me downe, that I might be humbled: and punished me for example of other sinners: and although he strangely suffers me in this world to perish without succor, yet trust I in the world to come to find mercie, by the merites of my Saviour to whom I commend thee, and commit my soule.

Thy repentant husband for his disloyaltie, Robert Greene.

Fœlicem fuisse infœustum.

FINIS.